REMARKS

Claims 1-4 are pending in the present application.

Claims 1-2 and 4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Harris (US 5,453,664) in view of Saka (US 5,345,147), further in view of Kramer (US 3,789,211). Claim 3 has been rejected as obvious over the same references, and further in view of Ray (4,211,955). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites "a *series-wired* light string" comprising "a plurality of light sockets *connected in series*," each of which is adapted to receive "a miniature light bulb" and "a plurality of voltage-responsive *semiconductor* shunts, each *semiconductor* shunt being electrically connected in parallel across a respective light socket to maintain the current passing through the light socket in the event that a light bulb is not illuminated or is missing from the light socket."

As noted in the remarks of the Amendment filed on May 15, 2006, Harris does not teach a *semiconductor* shunt, but rather teaches the use of two parallel resistive shunts. As stated in Harris, col. 4, lines 27-40, "the shunts are made of breakdown material ... when the filament breaks, enough heat is generated "to cause the oxide coating of the shunts to break down, resulting in a lowering of the resistance across the shunts to allow passage of current thereacross." This fundamental deficiency of the Harris reference is not addressed in the Office Action.

Moreover, as the Examiner states in the Office Action, Harris does not teach that the shunt is a single Zener diode shunt, as recited in claim 4 of the present application. For this feature of the invention, the Examiner turns to Sawka. The Examiner asserts that "Sawka shows a Zener diode (32) as a voltage-responsive shunt being used in a series-wired light string (See light bulbs L1 and L9 in Fig. 1)."

Significantly, however, and contrary to the Examiner's assertion, Sawka does *not* teach a series-wired light string. The light bulbs of Sawka are connected *in parallel* between the voltage source (12 volt receptacle 14) and ground – see Fig. 1 of Sawka. Thus, Sawka is directed to an entirely different situation and problem than the present invention. If a bulb of the parallel connected circuit of Sawka burns out or is missing from a light socket, current continues to flow through the other light bulbs. The Zener diodes of Sawka serve to prevent burn out of the remaining bulbs (which remain lit because they are connected in parallel), by draining potential excess current to ground.

Since Sawka does not disclose a series-wired light circuit (a feature which is expressly recited in independent claim 1 of the present application), and since Sawka is directed to address an entirely different problem than the present invention, Sawka does not provide the required motivation or suggestion to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the circuit of Harris to arrive at the present invention.

In view of the foregoing, applicant submits that the present invention is distinguishable over the prior art of record, and that the application is in condition for allowance. A prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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